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INFORMATION REPORT

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

COUNTRY

Iran

SUBJECT

Opium Traffic

PROCESSED

PLACE ACQUIRED (By source)

25X1X6
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DATE OF INFORMATION (Date or dates, on or between which, events or conditions described in report existed)

12 Jun 55 and earlier

SOURCE

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1. Recently the government in Teheran manifested a desire to eradicate the use of opium, and two ministers have visited an opium den where "Shireh" (juice of opium) is smoked. The closing of one of such numerous dens will be of no value outside of presenting a facade to prove that the government is in earnest as a "reform" and "anti-corruption" government. Thousands of addicts are pleading with the authorities for help to overcome addiction, but as long as numerous top officials and leading authorities use opium themselves in one form or another, nothing of lasting benefit can be achieved.
2. Opium and hashish smoking will continue as long as illegal production and distribution traffic is one of the leading vested interests of Iran. It is in fact the logical consequence of the policy of certain European colonial powers to subjugate Asiatic nations like China, a policy that had numerous commercial houses like the Memazee Commercial Firm at Hong Kong and other points in the Far East, carrying it on with immense profits. The same policy is at the bottom of the opium cultivation and traffic and its illegal distribution in Iran, assisted by government agencies and the country's representatives in foreign capitals and port cities. As this matter benefits a large number of government departments and their dependents, the exposure of any single official promoting it, or a raid upon certain dens will hardly make a dent in the hard crust of a world-wide secret traffic.
3. International bodies and committees appointed for the suppression of this trade, and the control of opium cultivation, have always recorded the impossibility of a successful termination of this deadly menace. The reason they give is the invariable discovery that the quantity of surreptitiously smuggled narcotics is great deal more than the amount to which a given country is permitted by treaty to cultivate, for the world's medical needs.
4. Instances may be recalled where a representative of Iran stated before a committee that only a certain acreage was planted in Iran, in accord with an International Agreement, but he was soon contradicted by other members of the committee, who presented statistics showing that a great deal more than the quantity mentioned had been smuggled that year into

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the world market.

5. Those familiar with the ill-equipped customs service of Iran know that there are numerous points on the coast line in the South-Southeast and Southwest and on the northern frontiers which are entirely unguarded - not to mention that even the supposedly well-guarded ports are controlled by agents who made a business of winking at the exit of contraband narcotics to other lands.
6. In view of these facts nothing short of a drastic step could eradicate this disgraceful and criminal traffic which brings shame upon the name of a country whose past contributions to the glories of world civilization has entitled it to the highest praise.
7. That drastic step could only be the removal of governments such as the present one, many of whose high officials not only profit by this illicit traffic, but who themselves are addicted to the use of the drug.

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Opium traffic
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